

morning seems so far away by lucdarling

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Summary:

Prom night is supposed to be a magical time of swirling fabric and sticky punch. The night becomes something darker when the girls take matters into their own hands. Billy arrives in the aftermath when he goes looking for his date, to find Evie frozen in shock at the turn of events.

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Author's Note:

- Inspired by [sins of my youth](#). by [Alias_B](#).

I tripped and fell and wrote this immediately after reading Chapter 28 of SOMY. It's probably a little rough, more feelings than anything else as I looped YUNGBLUD's "god save me, but don't drown me out" which is where the title comes from.

Have some Billy POV and a slight AU, where the prom dates happen upon the immediate aftermath of the Evie-Frederick fight. Obviously spoilers for Chapter 28 so go read that first and then come back for sibling feels.

"How long are girls supposed to take in the bathroom?"

Billy shrugs. "Always been a mystery to us lesser mortals, dude. They'll be back and primped and ready for more dancing. Just you wait."

"Enjoy the break." Steve advises with a laugh. Their punch cups are empty again, joining the other plastic shells littering the table in front of them.

Tommy shakes his head. "No, I feel like something's up. Carol can take a long time sure, but not like this."

"So what do you wanna do about it?" Billy lounges back, head pounding in time with the music. He could almost fall asleep if it wasn't so loud. Sleep and perchance to dream of soft starlight, swirls of tulle and lace and Evie's laugh ringing out.

"Not sit around here," Tommy frets. He stands before Billy can coax him down, lovelorn fool waiting for his noble lady to return. Steve exchanges a look with Billy and with a sigh, they follow. The three amigos, one more adventure through the clouds of hairspray and

shuffling feet to the far side of the gym.

They escape to a hallway that is eerie, empty and brightly lit. It's quiet and still, all the noise cocooned away by the double doors they just stepped through.

Tommy stands in front of the girls bathroom, heavy door shut before him.

"C'mon man, we can at least sit down back in the gym." Steve tries as Tommy's hand rests on the wall. "They'll be back soon, pretty as ever."

Tommy opens his mouth and Billy hushes him, head cocked as his ears pick up the sound of something wrong. It's faint, this sound. The familiar echo of a girl screaming, fighting off someone larger and grasping hands who seek to defile.

Billy's jogged to the end of the hall before he even realizes his feet are carrying him away, Tommy and Steve are quick behind him as they hear it too.

The fight falls silent as Billy pushes the door to the outside open. He's not surprised to find their prom dates huddled at the top of the steps.

Tommy wastes no time, gathering Carol close as she shakes. Heather turns into Steve's arms, eyes dark in a pale face. Billy steps closer, wary to his girl. She's sobbing, hiccuping and hunched over as her hands worry in her lap.

"Hey Eves," Billy greets cautiously. His eyes flick to the bottom of the steps, taking in the pooling blood and the unnatural stillness of a hated man. He's seen the sight before, just with more water and a person he loved far more than the rapist who made himself at home in his girlfriend's life. He's not sorry about tonight's outcome and wonders just how much is going to come to light when the cops finally show up.

Evie shifts, lifting to meet his face. Billy's words of safety, an echo of what his friends are crooning to their prom dates, leave his head when he spies Max huddled under her arm.

"The fuck?" Billy mutters under his breath. "You aren't in high school, twerp." It's inane, the way his brain focuses on the small detail that doesn't matter.

He doesn't need to ask what happened, not with the way Max's small frame shudders at his voice and Evie's lips thin. Max has always been a fighter when it comes down to it. Billy likes that about her.

"Hell," Billy swears and forgets about the deposit on his nice suit as he sits next to his girl and little sister on the concrete step. They're cold, thin fabric granting little protection against the chill.

He pulls Max upright and into him, whispering the words he would have wanted to hear. They're still little comfort, rubbing against her clammy skin and the apologies tumbling from her own lips. She doesn't hear him but Billy doesn't stop his reassurances, knows they'll filter back when she needs them. Or maybe he's only consoling himself, readying for the next act of their lives.

"Shh, sweet girl." Evie soothes, petting Max's hair with gentle hands until her voice stutters to a halt. "You saved all of us, thank you Max. You did something so good here." Billy catches sight then, of the blues and purples decorating Evie's arms, the red flush on her cheek. He tenses, anger fanning hot before Max shaking in his arms quells it down to embers.

"That's why you have to go," Evie's voice stays soft even as she looks steadily at Billy. Her hands don't falter, quieting Max in their shared embrace as she continues. "You were never here, Max darling. You need to go home right now. Go back to bed, fall fast asleep with dreams of sunshine and sweetness. You're going to wake up in the morning, your mother will have breakfast on the table and I'll come over. We'll talk about all this then, tomorrow."

Billy knows their group's absence from the dancing, the prom king and queen out of sight of the masses, is already being gossiped about. There will be people looking for them soon and then the real circus will descend.

Evie's right, it's no place for Max. Silly and loyal and his to protect. The way he couldn't do for the other women in his life until after

they'd suffered harm. His arms tighten around her for a moment and Max curls against him, tears dried up as she rests.

"You did real good," Billy tells her, mouth against her ear. He's only speaking to her, the two of them sitting on the steps with the wind's chill biting into them. He's not the only one who knows what Max has done but he will be the one to pick up the pieces before she shatters apart. He can make sure of that. "But it's time for you to go home. You don't need to see this, you've been strong enough shitbird."

"Okay," Max croaks after a long moment. Billy wishes he had some water to share, knows she's all tapped out. He knows she'll cry more, tucked away in her bedroom alone. He'll be at the school by then, dealing with the police and his girlfriend who's been through such a shock, stumbling across the body or however the girls are going to fashion the tale.

"How'd you get here, anyway?" Steve breaks in, eyes wide and worried where they take in the picture of the siblings and Evie. None of them have moved yet, frozen to the cold concrete.

"My board," Max mumbles into Billy's chest, sniffing in a disgusting way. "It's in the bushes."

Heather unearths it, untangling roots and brushing off the dirt. Billy takes it from her, tucking it under his arm as he and Evie guide Max to upright. Yep, he's never getting that deposit back and Neil will be angry but Billy will weather it. Just like always.

"I'll drive you home and then come back," Billy says, chin resting on the top of Max's head. She doesn't move away and that's the strongest sign of all that the events tonight have rocked her. "Not like the Mayberry cops here are gonna notice."

"Your car is flashy as hell." Max rolls her eyes, regaining her equilibrium and false brightness. Her mask tightens, a flash of teeth and expression that Billy has seen in the mirror. Of course she can't let a chance to razz Billy pass her by. "I'll be fine, just gimme my board."

"So you can skate home alone in the dark?" Carol and Tommy frown as one.

"I don't think I'm comfortable with that, Max." Evie adds her two cents. "Just let Billy drive you home, it won't take ten minutes."

"Why?" Max's face, youthful innocence all but vanished. "The monster is already dead." Billy sighs and herds her down the steps. His car is parked on the side of the school, ready for a getaway in case the night had turned out lame or Evie had wanted a quick way out.

He never imagined this.

"I'll be back," Billy promises his girl as she stands at the top of the steps. Blue is draped around her, starlight shining as Evie smiles at them. Carol and Heather come to her side, a trio of girl survivors seeing their little sister off.

"C'mon," Billy chivvies Max away, doesn't try to hide away from stepping over the corpse. The two of them have grown up with other horrors and Billy doesn't dwell on the tiny kernel of fear that Max will stumble upon worse one of these days. "You're gonna be okay after this, Max. I promise."

She looks up at him with red-rimmed eyes and hair tucked around her ears. She appears impossibly young and ancient together at once, making Billy blink.

"Don't make promises you can't keep, Billy." She takes the sting out of her words, leaning against his bulk and not shrugging off the arm around her shoulders as they round the corner to the parking lot.

"You're gonna be okay," he says again, to himself in the empty car, after Max has been delivered safely home. He knows he's going back to a three-ring circus of Mayberry cops and shock blankets and the news that a teacher has died in a freak accident.

Billy arranges his face into an approximation of surprise, parks the Camaro and runs to where Evie awaits in the middle of it all.